

6779.
THREE
SERMONS

PREACH'D at
Stockton in the County of Salop.

The First, on
GAL. V. 22. *The Fruit of the Spirit is
Love, &c.*

The Two last, on
LUKE XI. 13. *If ye then being evil, know
how to give good gifts to your children, how
much more shall your heavenly Father give the
Spirit to them that ask him?*

By ALEXANDER SCOTT, M. A.

*Published to Vindicate them from the Misrepresentations
they have met with.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for GEORGE SAWBRIDGE, at the
Three Flower-de-Luces in Little-Britain,
MDCCXI.

Price Six-pence.

THREE
SERMONS

PLACED BY
Stewart in the County of Salop



THE
SERMONS
BY
THE
REV. J. STURGEON
OF
ST. MARTIN'S LANE
LONDON
PRINTED BY
J. JOHNSON
ST. MARTIN'S LANE
1801

To **W. W.** Esq;

SIR,

When the benefiting of Mankind, is that which Persons should aim at when they Publish any Treaties, I cannot approve of Mens forwardness to send every Discourse to the Press, that might be well adapted to a Christian Auditory; especially when we are already supply'd with so many Excellent Practical Tracts: And 'tis probable, that you and others will wonder at my Publication of these plain Sermons; which yet I should not need to be ashamed of, had my Management (as I am sensible it is not) been answerable to the Weight and Dignity of the Subjects therein handled. But, Sir, there are other Reasons of publishing Sermons, such as Vindicating the Preacher, when Traduced, Aspersed, Ridicul'd and Misrepresented; and he hereby appeals to the World for his Justification. Sir, when this is my present Case, I know no Person more proper to Dedicate these to than yourself; and must tell my Readers, that if they receive any Advantage by them, as I hope they will, they are oblig'd to you for a sight of them. Yet I would not have them mistake: It is not, as is usual in these Cases, from your Approbation of them, but (which I publish not to expose you, but to vindicate my self) your injurious treatment of them; Of the First, by making it the Subject of your profane scurrilous Mirth, and that on the day whereon it was Preached; and of the Second, as you unworthily misrepresented it, by reporting, That I spent half an Hour in canvassing the Point, whether Solomon was sav'd or damn'd. When the Reader will find that scarce a Minute was spent on that Subject. Tho', had it been more, when unthinking Debauchees make Solomon's Example a Plea for their persisting in Lewdness, I say if more time had been spent in order to convince them of the Vanity of this Plea, no good Man would esteem that time misemploy'd. Hence these Sermons are presented to the Publick View, both that the World may judge whether they deserve this Treatment and Representation: and that you may on sedate Thoughts judge whether you have herein acted as became a Christian, or a Gentleman, in exposing a Clergy-man, and him a Stranger, to the Scorn and Derision of them you met with, (however those with whom your Reports would have Credit) and hereby, (as much as lay in your Power) murdering my Reputation, and hence rendring my Ministerial Labours less successful by making my Person, contemptible. I am sensible that neither my Person, nor Performances, abstracted from other Considerations, challenge any Regard: But when through these, my Sacred Function, (which the Irreligious Debauchees of this Age profanely Nick-name Priest-Craft) comes to be traduced, and thereby the Honour of Christ himself (who Instituted this Office, and by one of his Substitutes call'd me to it, (tho' unworthy of that Dignity) is infringed; I look on't as my Duty to do what I can to prevent the Contempt of my Function, and the Dishonour of my Lord and Master; and hence have recourse to this Appeal, which probably might have been sooner made, had not my whole time been taken up by other Work which some Friends of yours have been pleas'd

The Dedication.

to cut out for me. When St. Paul preach'd to Felix of Righteousness or Justice, of Temperance or Continence, (*εὐσεβείας*) the First made him reflect on his own unrighteous Depredations of his Province, and other Acts of Injustice; and the Second on his Adulterous detaining of Drusilla another Man's Wife: And tho' he might, thro' the Interest his Brother Pallas had with the Emperor, hope (as it afterwards happen'd) to escape Punishment from an earthly Tribunal; yet the Thoughts of a Divine Tribunal, a Judgment to come, made this great Roman Prefect to tremble before his contemptible Prisoner. But there are some in these Days, who, when rous'd by Sermons, or otherwise come to reflect on their Guilt, have found Methods to still their Consciences, or at least to drown the noise of its Clamours: And among others, by their intemperate Laughter, and ridiculing the serious Advice of their Monitors, tho' solemnly deliver'd as the Word of GOD, and by them evinc'd to be the Will of the Great King of Kings. Sir, I beseech you, examine yourself, and judge impartially whether this be not your own Case. I press'd upon my Auditors, in my First Sermon, the Necessity of a Kind, Loving, and Peaceable Temper, as essential to, and inseparable from a sincere Christian. Sir, did not this make you reflect on your Carriage toward that worthy Person, who labours among you, and is over you in the Lord, whom you are therefore, according to the Apostle's Injunction, to esteem very highly in Love for his Work sake, and for his Master Christ's sake, whose Minister he is? Did not the sense of the Neglect of that special Love and Respect which is due to him, nay your scandalous Variance with him, make you uneasy, and cause you to make use of your sinful Mirth, and the Sport and Pastime, you made by your Reflections on the Preacher that touch'd the Sore, as a Medicine to allay the smart? Sir, I bless God, I have in some measure learnt the Lesson given Matth. v. 44 which our Blessed Saviour taught us not only by his Sermon on the Mount, but also by his Example on the Cross; Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you: And do sincerely present that pious Petition in our Excellent Litany, That it would please God to forgive our Enemies, Persecuters and Slanderers, and to turn their Hearts. And particularly, I do most heartily beg of God, that He would so turn your Heart, that you becoming sensible of your former Failings, may for the future walk worthy of your Vocation as a Christian, answerable to your Station and Quality as a Gentleman, and become Exemplary in all Christian Vertues and Graces; that you may have your Recompence of Reward in another World, and in this, enjoy the Favour of God, inward Peace in your Reflections on a new well-spent Life, becoming truly lov'd and honour'd by all, especially Good Men, and hereby oblige me, among others, to be in every respect sincerely,

S I R,

Your Faithful humble Servant,

A. S.



S E R M O N I.

GALATIANS V. 22. and part of the 23 Verse.

But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.



IN the 25th Verse of this Chapter, some few Verses after my *Text*, we find the Apostle St. Paul bespeaking the *Galatians*, to whom he now writes in this manner. *If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.* Which Words seem to carry in them something of Smartness and Sharpness, to cast a Reflection upon the *Galatians*, implying that they, at least some of them pretended much to the Spirit, but yet did not walk according to the Spirit; made outward Profession and boasted of themselves, as having greater Measures of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit than others, whereas their Lives and Actions did testify no such thing, but rather the contrary. And indeed both in the Apostles time and ever since the Church of Christ hath had large Experience of such Pretenders. This our Apostle as He took notice thereof in the *Corinthian Church* also, so in his Epistle to them, he neither wonders himself, nor would have them wonder thereat. *And no marvel*, saith he, (and he gives the reason why there was no ground to marvel thereat) *for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness.* So excellent and desirable in themselves are the Gifts and Graces of the Divine Spirit, that both Evil Angels and Evil Men, tho' they are but Strangers and Enemies to this Spirit, would willingly be taken for Friends to it, and Partakers of it.

The

The *Extraordinary Measures and Gifts of the Spirit* which were first given to the Apostles, and after for some Ages were continued in the Church, such as the Power of working Miracles, healing Diseases, casting out Devils, speaking divers Tongues, tho' they did not immediately tend to, nor were design'd for, the Salvation and Sanctification of those that had them, but rather for the Confirmation and Propagation of the Gospel; yet were they justly esteem'd and highly priz'd, and in themselves desirable. To be an Instrument to God in so eminent a manner for the good of the World, to be able to do so mighty Works, which could proceed from nothing but the Almighty Power of God, acting in them, and with them, that did them; to be sent an immediate Messenger of God, by Signs, Wonders, and Miracles, to convert the World from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan to God; like another *Moses* to bring the Children of *Israel* out of *Aegypt*; to have been made a God unto Man, as *Moses* is said to have been made a God unto *Pharaoh*; this is a most honourable, most glorious Employment, becoming the most Noble, the most Improved amongst the Sons of Men; Next to the Sanctifying Grace of God, this is the greatest Accomplishment, the most valuable Gift that Almighty God can bestow on the Children of Men. And our Apostle, tho' he doth indeed undervalue these *Extraordinary Gifts* in comparison with Charity, and the Saving Graces of the Spirit in the 12, 13, and 14th Chapters of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*; yet doth he advise the Members of that Church to *covet earnestly the best Gifts*, to *desire Spiritual Gifts*, especially that they might *Prophesy*. Most useful and excellent then were those *Spiritual Gifts* in the *First* times of Christianity, and therefore just ground was there to esteem and value them, and they being in themselves so valuable, *Satan* and his Instruments, Wicked Men, were not wanting in pretending to them. That *Man of Sin*, whoever he was, spoken of, *2 Thess. ii.* is said to have his coming after the working of *Satan*, with all Power, and Signs, and Lying Wonders. And *Simon Magus* the Sorcerer, who had in former times bewitched the People of *Samaria*; so that they all gave heed to him as some great one, seeing the Miracles done, first by *Philip*, then by *Peter* and *John*, how that by laying on of the Hands of these Apostles the Holy Ghost was given, was very ambitious of this Power, and for the purchase of so excellent a Gift offer'd Money to the Apostles: Give me also this Power, saith he, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost, *Acts viii. 19.* This vile Sorcerer was sensible what glorious Accomplishments, what admirable Endowments these were, and thereupon was exceeding desirous of them; tho' he was so basely sordid, so sortishly stupid, as to think they could be procured by Money, and so grossly prophane, as thereby to design nothing more than the procuring to himself Glory and Advantage, than to be admired amongst the People, or to make a Gain of them, a greater Gain than he had formerly got by his Sorceries. But we learn from hence, that when these extraordinary

dinary Gifts of the Spirit were dispensed in the Church, there were many that pretended to them, who had no share or interest in them ; many that desired them for more low, base, and inglorious Ends, than they were design'd to by him that gave them. Nay after the Gospel was spread abroad, and the Light and Truth thereof had made such progress in the World, that these *Extraordinary* Fruits of the Spirit were not necessary for the farther Confirmation thereof, and consequently ceased, were no longer continued in the Church ; yet were there not wanting ever and anon such as would be pretending to them. The History of the Church sufficiently acquaints us, what advantage the Bishops, and other Ecclesiasticks of the *Roman* Church, made by such Frauds and Forgeries as these ; How they founded and maintain'd their Superstitions by feigned Miracles ; how they abus'd the Ignorance and Simplicity of their credulous Profylites with fabulous Legends, and forged Stories of great Wonders and miraculous Operations done by their pretended Saints. But, blessed be God, the Christian Churches are now more enlighten'd, grown more wise than to be seduced and gull'd by such manifest Forgeries. We adore the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that when there was need for it, He gave such extraordinary and wonderful Gifts to the Sons of Men. And we acquiesce in and submit to the same Wisdom and Goodness of God, in taking them away when he thought fit, having abundant grounds for our Faith from the undoubted Miracles of Our Blessed Lord himself and his Apostles, recorded in the Sacred Books of the said Apostles and the Evangelists. But tho' the Light and Knowledge of the latter Times has put to silence most Pretenders to these *Miraculous* Gifts ; yet the Church of Christ as they always had, so have they still at present store of Pretenders to the *Ordinary* Gifts of the Spirit, the *inward* Graces that are wrought by this Spirit in the Hearts of all good and holy Men. As the most fruitful Soils are stored with variety of Weeds, and useles or noisome Plants, so the best Churches ever had the Roots of Hypocrisy springing up amongst them ; and no wonder that such as are Enemies in their Hearts to God, and the ways of God, should yet be desirous to seem Pious and Holy Persons. There is an such essential Beauty, such an overcoming Loveliness in true Piety, that no Man of ordinary ingenuity but would gladly be accounted Pious, accounted Vertuous. Besides, crafty Hypocrites know too well what temporal Advantages to make of the outward Garb and Pretence of Honesty and Piety, how they can with more ease and facility both satisfy their inward Lusts, and carry on their worldly Designs whilst they are taken for Good and Religious Men. Most notorious Pretenders in this kind in the *Jewish* Church were the *Pharisees* ; Men so skill'd and exercised in all the Arts and Methods of Hypocrisy, so accustom'd to carry on the most pernicious Designs under a Cloak and Colour of Religion, that the very name of a *Pharisee* is justly odious to all Persons of Sincerity

Sincerity and Integrity. Must not they needs be most notorious Villains in this kind, most excellent for this Religious Forgery, that could bring *the Lord of Life and Glory* to the Block, to the Cross, for Blasphemy? That could prevail with the deluded People to *deny the Holy One and the Just, and desire a murderer* to be granted unto them? That could arraign, accuse, condemn him for Impiety, and want of Reverence to the Divine Majesty, whose mighty Works they had seen, whose heavenly Discourses they had heard, whose Holy, Innocent, Inoffensive Life they could not but be acquainted with? But they are not the Jewish, but the Christian Pharisees my Text relates to, and with whom St. Paul hath to do in this Epistle. For of so diffusive a Nature is this Leaven of Hypocrisie, that tho' our Blessed Lord did most plainly caveat his Disciples against it, yet his Apostles were not able to preserve from its Infection those very Churches which they themselves gather'd, planted, and water'd, whereof they had the Care and Inspection. No sooner did Our Lord, and the Labourers he sent into his Harvest Sow the precious Seed, but the Enemy mixed Tares with it. The Apostles were not so happy Fishers of Men, but that in the Nets which they spread were caught as well bad as good Fishes. The Fold of Christ was never so guarded, but that Goats as well as Sheep did creep into it. We may talk of pure Churches, but we shall never find them, till we come to Heaven, to the Cœlestial Jerusalem, to the blessed Assembly and Church of the First-born, the Spirits of Just Men made perfect. The Angels must come down and separate the Chaff from the Wheat, the Goats from the Sheep, before the Wheat be gather'd into the Barn, and the Sheep sit down together at Christ's right hand. And when shall that be? Not till the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all his Holy Angels with him, as He himself hath foretold, *Matth. xxv. 31*. Then indeed not only the Tears of the Saints, but the Paintings of Hypocritical Pretenders shall be wiped away from their Faces. Then shall Jerusalem, the Church be searched with Candles, (as the Prophet's Expression is) such a Light set up therein, that all the Workers and Works of Darkness shall be discover'd; then shall be known who have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter thro' the Gates into the City; they are St. John's Words in his last Chapter of his Revelations: And then the Days shall be without, not only Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers and Idolaters, but whosoever loveth and maketh a Lye, that is, saith Dr. Hammond, "Hypocritical treacherous Persons, false equivocal Members of Christ's Church; These as well as Sorcerers and the rest shall be kept out of the Church above; but the Church upon Earth never was nor have we ground to expect that ever it will be so pure, as to have all such excluded from it. That there were those that did pretend to the Spirit, and yet did walk after the Flesh in the Galatian Church, our Apostle knew very well, and doth most sharply reflect upon them in this whole Chapter, (as I intimated before) not only as gross Impostors, but as less considerative, weak and foolish;

foolish ; intimating that whole Church to have so little Wisdom, so little Understanding, as not to discern their Wickednesses, notwithstanding all the fair shew they made. *The Works of the Flesh are manifest*, saith he, v. 19. As if he had said, Away with your idle Pretences, your Lives and Practices are such, that all sober Men, Men that have any degree of sound Reason, or the least touch of true Piety, must needs condemn Them and You. What ! Live in known Uncleanness, (for such he intimates them to be) v. 19. Live in open Strife, in Hatred, Emulations, Wrath, Seditions, and yet stile yourselves the Only Spiritual Persons ! What irrational Delusions are these ! I shall not need to write much to convince yourselves or others how far you are yet immersed in the very Dregs of Carnality, in the most sordid Lusts of the Flesh : I will only lay before you what the Lusts of the Flesh are, and leave it to your own and other Mens Consciences to judge by them. And so in the 19, 20, and 21 verses, he gives in a List, a large List of *the Works of the Flesh*, to be perused in that Church, and all succeeding Churches of Christians. And upon that occasion he proceeds to enumerate also some of the genuine and proper *Fruits and Graces of the Spirit*, that as by the former Catalogue of the Sins of the *Flesh* they might discern what they were, even carnal, profane, vicious persons : so by this of *the Fruits of the Spirit*, they might learn what they were not ; how far they were wanting, and came short of that Spirit which they pretended to.

In my Text are enumerated the *Fruits of the Spirit*, which the Apostle thinks fit now to mind them of. *The Fruit of the Spirit* (saith he) is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance. Of all which it may be observed in the first place, (and it shall be my Observation at this time) that they are such as refer immediately not to our Duty towards GOD, but to our Duty towards our Neighbour, towards one another. The Apostle well understood that these false Teachers amongst the *Galatians* made great shew of Zeal for GOD, and for the *Jews* Ceremonial Worship ; and reviled, yea persecuted the Believing Heathen, because they did not comply with this Worship, these Ceremonies, which were originally instituted by GOD Himself : And therefore, tho' he well knew also their Falseness and Hypocrisie herein, that they had no true Reverence either for GOD or that Worship, yet he seemingly takes for granted what they pretended ; but lets them understand that there were other *Fruits of the Spirit*, viz. such as relate to one another, which they were Strangers to, and thereby were their Cheats and Pretences sufficiently manifest. Indeed we cannot be truly honest Men, unless we be pious Christians. The Fear and Love of GOD is the Foundation of all true Love and Friendship amongst Men. If we be wanting in our Duty towards GOD, deal falsely with Him, we shall be wanting in our Duty towards our Neighbour, and much more deal falsely with them, when we have an Opportunity and Temptation thereto. Religion is es-

sential to all Moral Virtues. True Morality is the Fruit of true Piety. Christian Religion is Morality in its Perfection. The Design of it is to make us live like rational Creatures, that is, good Moralists, to enable us to answer the Ends of our Creation, in our Duties towards GOD and towards Men, to restore us to that Universal Purity and Perfection by CHRIST, which we lost in *Adam*. It is vain to distinguish betwixt True Religion and True Morality. No Man is truly a Moral Man, that is not truly a Religious Man: And no Man is truly Religious, that is not truly Moral. High Pretences to Piety there may be in persons that are Immoral, and secretly, and inwardly at least, Vicious; but no true, no real Piety. On the other hand, some Umbrages of Vertue, some small Resemblances thereof there may be in impious and irreligious persons, especially such as have had ingenuous Education, and have not altogether debauched their own Natures and Tempers by contracted Habits of Sin and Wickedness: But it is Religion and Piety, the true Fear of GOD, that must make us truly Moral, truly Vertuous Men. As therefore it is groundless and vain to pretend to be Honest and Vertuous, while we neglect GOD, and the Duties of His immediate Worship; while we do not acknowledge our Dependence on Him, make our Addresses to Him, publicly and privately, by imploring His Grace and Assistance, for the subduing of Sin in us, for His Direction and Guidance in all our Ways, all our Undertakings, for the Pardon of our Sins, and removing from us those Judgments which by our renewed Provocations we may justly expect from His hand; by ascribing to Him the Glory due unto Him, for all the good things we enjoy by His Care and Providence over us, whether they relate to this Life, or to our future State; to our Bodies, or to our Souls: Whilst we cannot without murmuring and repining humbly submit ourselves to His Dispensations, tho' they may seem grievous unto us, cannot *deny* ourselves, and *take up* our Cross, that is, be willing to forsake all our carnal Desires, and worldly Enjoyments, rather than sin against GOD, and with Contentedness acquiesce in such Instances of His Providence, such Portions of outward Blessings, such a Condition and Calling as He in His Wisdom thinks fit to exercise us with, afford to us, and appoint for us: *Lastly*, While we do not conscientiously, and with ready and chearful Hearts, attend upon those Sacred Institutions whereby we are to testify our Observance of Him, and our Obedience to Him, whereby we are to manifest to the World that we own Him to be our GOD, and His People for our Brethren; that we Believe His Word, Hope in His Promises, Fear His Threatnings, Trust in His Mercy, Devote ourselves to His Service; In a word, while we do not *Love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and all our Soul, and with all our Mind, which*, our Saviour tells us, *is the first and great Commandment*; I say, As while we are not thus Religious towards GOD, it is vain to pretend or think ourselves to be good Men: so it is *Hypocritical* to pretend to be thus

thus Religious, and yet not to walk in all Honesty and Good Will, Love and Peace towards Men. To that *first and great Commandment*, our Saviour indispensibly annexeth this, as *the second and like to it*, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. *Shew me thy Faith by thy Works*, saith St. James, thy Love to GOD, by thy Love to thy Neighbour. And St. John hath a sharp and pungent Interrogation to the same purpose, and more express. 1 Joh. iv. 20. *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* As a participation of the same Nature, so our mutual sight of, and converse with one another, ought to enkindle mutual Love in us. GOD, indeed, more deserves the Love of every one of us, than we can deserve the Love of one another: yet by reason of GOD's invisibility to us, and his distance from us, the Apostle seems to take it for granted, that it is easier for us to love one another, than it is to love GOD; and therefore concludes it to be a meer delusion, to pretend to the greatest and most difficult, when we are wanting in that which is more easie to us. He must needs be an absolute Stranger to the Gospel, wholly unacquainted with the Doctrine which CHRIST taught when He was upon Earth, and inspired His Apostles to teach when He was gone to Heaven, must never have read or heard the Sacred Writings of the Christian Church, the Books of the Apostles and Evangelists, that knows not that Love is the grand Condition of the Gospel-Charter. Even Faith itself, without Love, will not save us. The Apostle hath expressly told us, That that Faith whereby we are justified, is a *Faith working by Love*, or a Faith that is completed by Love, in the 6th verse of this Chapter of my *Text*.

As the Gospel acquaints us with the highest and greatest Instances of GOD's Love to Mankind, so it lays on us the greatest Obligations to love all Men. The more we are enlarged to the Love of each other, the more we desire, promote and rejoice in the Good of one another; The more we come near to the Likeness of GOD, the more we partake of the Divine Nature; for *God is Love*: And the more ill Will, Envy, Hatred, Emulations, Contentions, and groundless Estrangement from each other prevails amongst us, the more we come near, and are like those Evil Apostate Spirits that hate both GOD and Us. Shall GOD so far condescend as to make Man the Object of His Love, and shall we esteem Man, whom GOD loves, unworthy of our Love? Or can we hope that GOD should love us, be at Peace with us, when we do not love, are not at Peace with our Brethren? He that can thus hope, must ground his Perswasions upon other Arguments than any the Gospel will afford him. Our LORD, the Author of the Gospel, immediately to that Form of Prayer which He himself hath left us, subjoins this as a farther Explication of one Branch thereof: *For if you forgive Men their Trespases, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you*. Whenever therefore we consult the Sacred Records of the New-Testa-

ment, when we seriously reflect upon the Religion which we all profess; we may justly wonder that any can stile themselves *Saints*, pretend to greater Measures of the Spirit, look upon themselves and their own Party as the only People of GOD, and yet slight, condemn, censure, hate all such as do not run into the same Extravagances with themselves; that can raise, foment, continue Divisions and Separations in those Churches, which they cannot, they dare not but own for eminent Churches of CHRIST. What Spirit it is that acts such, we will not judge; this we assert with the Apostle, that *the fruits of the Gospel-Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.* All which Graces are as indispensibly to be observed by all Saints, by all Professors of Christianity, are as essential to the evidencing us to be CHRIST'S Disciples, to live under the Influences of this Spirit, as those Duties are which refer immediately to GOD Himself: And that they do all refer to our mutual Duties as Christians, which is the Ground of my present Discourse, is the joynt Consent of most Expositors: and the Context in what goes before, and in what follows, and the very Texture and Coherence of them in themselves, doth evince as much. For *Love*, which is the first-Fruit of the *Nine* here mention'd, it is taken here in a limited and restrain'd Notion, not in its largest Acceptation, as it includes our whole Duty both towards God and Man, and so relates to Both, (as sometimes it is taken, as when it is said, *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*;) Nor as it includes our whole Duty to one another; for then there needed no mention of the rest, but as it is a particular, one single Grace, and *Fruit of the Spirit*, relating to our Neighbour, as the rest here enumerated are, (they are all single Graces) and so it signifies that Heavenly Disposition whereby we are inclin'd to do all the Good we can to one another, a readiness to embrace all Opportunities of helping, advising, comforting and communicating to others, as their Necessities require, and our Abilities will permit. *Love*, saith *Grotius*, *hic significat Beneficentiam*, in this place denotes the *doing of Good*. Our Religion, the true Spirit of the Gospel, obliges us to be so far from doing Injury to, from Wronging or Deceiving one another, that it opens our Hearts and Hands to communicate sometimes of our own, thereby to supply the Necessities of others. Nay, the next Fruit of the Spirit, *Joy*, raises us higher still; for *Joy* denotes not only a Willingness, but a Rejoycing in doing Good, taking a Delight and inward Satisfaction therein. And indeed there is just Ground for a Man to rejoyce that God makes use of him to do good to others, that He singles him out as his Steward to dispense Blessings to the rest of his Household. I say, this is a true ground of Rejoycing, of inward Pleasure and Satisfaction to a Man's Mind, nay of Blessing God, For this is an Honour put upon us, it is highly valuable in itself, and it is lovely and honourable in the Eyes of all Men, and it intitles us

to

to a special Interest in God's Love. This Rejoycing in doing Good, doth not only make us *Perfect*, as our Heavenly Father is *Perfect*, according to our Saviour's Expression, *Matth. v.* that is, makes us in some degree like God himself, but it also gives us a special Interest in God's Love. *God loveth a chearful Giver.* They are, you know, the Apostles Words, *2 Cor. ix. 7.* Where by a *Chearful Giver*, I take to be meant him that chearfully embraces, and seeks after all Opportunities of doing all the Good he can in the World by what Means soever: So when it is said God *loves* such a one, thereby is signify'd that God in an especial manner Approves, is Delighted with, and will Reward him. This is he that rightly improves his Master's Talent, and therefore he need not fear but at the great Day of Accounts, he shall hear from the Mouth of his Lord, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.* The next Fruit of the Spirit is *Peace*. A Blessed Fruit also, if we consider and understand what the import of it is; for by *Peace* here is meant Peaceable-mindedness, an inoffensive Temper, call'd in other Places, (as Dr. *Hammond* observes) pursuing Peace, an endeavouring to live in Unity, Agreement and Concord. *Fuga Diffidiorum*, (saith *Grotius*) avoiding of Dissensions, Strifes and Divisions, and is opposed to Contention, Variance, Emulations and Seditions, which in the 20th *verse* are reckon'd as Fruits of the *Flesh*. *Pacem oppono*, saith Mr. *Calvin*, *rixis & contentionibus*. This *Peace* is an inward Aversness from, and a diligent Care of giving just ground of Offence to one another, that we neither provoke, nor be provoked. A Grace it is of large Extent, and vast Concernment; absolutely necessary as we are Men, and as we are Christians. Neither Civil, nor Ecclesiastical Societies can subsist without this Peaceableness. Men of unpeaceable and turbulent Spirits are the great Disturbers, the great Underminers both of Church and State; we should not hear so much of Seditions and Factions in the one, of Schisms and Divisions in the other, did this sanctifying Grace prevail amongst us, did this *Fruit of the Spirit* take place in our Hearts. What! Pretend to be the Disciples of Christ, the Prince of Peace, to live according to the Gospel, the Gospel of Peace, to be led by the Divine Spirit, the Spirit of Love and Peace; and yet be Contentious, Quarrellsome, Factious, Schismatical! Overturn all Government, shake the Foundations of the State, break down the Walls of the Church, rather than not enjoy their own Opinions, not to have both Church and State modell'd according to their shallow Apprehensions, not to say for the promoting of their Selfish, Carnal, Worldly Designs! If those Men who are of this Temper must be lookt upon to be led by the Divine Spirit, St. *Paul* was mistaken when he accounts *Peace* amongst the *Fruits of the Spirit*. The Three next Graces the Apostle instanceth in, are *Longsuffering*, *Gentleness*, *Goodness*; and the Two last are *Meekness*, *Temperance*; all which are easily granted to be several Branches of our Duty to one another. Concerning *Faith*,
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which comes in between them, there may be some doubt what the proper Notion thereof is in this place; but it being in Conjunction with the rest, there is all reason to conclude, that it here signifies, as it often doth, Fidelity, Faithfulness, honest Dealing in our Bargaining and Contracts one with another; That Uprightness and Sincerity of Heart, whereby we do to others, as we would have them do to us. *Calvin* upon the Words is express. *Fidem hic accipio pro Veritate, ut opponetur Astutiis, Fraudibus & Mendacio.* By Faith, says he, is to be understood Truth, in opposition to Craftiness, to Fraud and Lying. *Dr. Hammond* thus Paraphrases on the Word; Faith, saith he, That is Fidelity, in opposition to betraying one another. We cannot but own this Notion of Faith, for in our common Language a Faithful and an Honest Man are synonymous Terms. The Last, Temperance, tho' it includes a care of our own Bodies, yet it relates to our Neighbours too. As it guards our own Chastity, so it preserves us from assaulting or violating the Chastity of others, and is by the Apostle here directly opposed to those corrupt Fruits of the Flesh, mention'd verse 19. which I leave you to read. By this short glance on the several Fruits here mention'd of the Spirit; you see how the Doctrine of our Blessed Lord, and the Spirit whereby he rules in the Hearts of his People, both confirms and adds to all these Ties of Nature, whereby we stand obliged to Esteem, Love, and do Good to one another; and consequently, that we cannot be good Christians, unless we be good Men. Our Religion teaches us, not only to render unto God the things that are God's, but also to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, yea to one another all the Offices of true Love and Friendship. Where this Spirit dwells in a Man, he that is led and guided by the Influences of this Holy Spirit, is desirous to answer all Relations, to perform all Duties, that as a Creature he owes either to God his Creator, or to Men his Fellow-creatures. His business is to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men. He knows he is related to both, and therefore he is concern'd to give both their due. He well considers that comprehensive Charge which the Apostle *St. Paul* lays upon all Christians, *Fear God, honour the King, love the Brotherhood*; that is, *Catus Fidelium in quibus vivimus*, the whole Society of Christians amongst whom we live. And therefore, as he is in all his ways duly observant of God, so he is a good Subject in the State, a good Member in the Church, a good Husband, Father, and Master in his Family, a good Neighbour in the Parish and Place of his Abode. He understands that God hath made him a Sociable Creature, to live together and converse with other Creatures of the same Nature and Capacities with himself, that are equally related to God as he himself is; and that both he and they stand in need of one anothers help, and therefore he dares not upon any Pretence whatsoever, injure single Persons, or disturb Societies. Government and Governours he hath a Reverence for, as without whom it is impossible

possible for Societies to subsist. And he well knows how the Christian Religion, the Doctrine of Christ, doth not only allow of, but indispensibly command Obedience to Magistrates, to those that are in Authority ; That it obliges us to a due Reverence of their Persons, a quiet Submission to their Government, whether they be our Spiritual or our Civil Governours. No greater Reproach can be cast upon the Gospel, no greater Scandal or Hindrance can there be to its Progress in the World, than that the Professors thereof should be Men dishonest, nay Men of Turbulent Spirits ; Men that under a shew of Piety, under the colour of Religion, break the Laws and Measures of Love, Justice, Honesty, Good-Will and Kindness, in their private Converse and Dealings ; or are so daring as to raise Com-motions in Church or State, rather than their private Interest be cross'd, or their private Opinions and Persuasions not countenanced and approved of. O what strangers are such Men to these *Fruits of the Spirit* which the *Text* lays before us ! But I must draw to a Conclusion. May this Discourse but tend to the convincing us of what great weight Christianity lays upon a right discharge of our Duties towards one another, both in our private Converse and Dealings, and as we are joynt Members of a Sacred and Civil Community, and I have what I design'd therein. For were we throughly convinced of this, as we should be able to *try the Spirits whether they are of God*, as St. John adviseth us ; so we should see the Excellency of Christian Religion, how it leads us into the right Path both of inward and outward Peace and Happiness ; how it rectifies, quiets and composes all the secret Motions of our own Spirits, and thereby makes us Friends to God, and Friends to one another. *Glory to God, and God-will amongst Men*, is the grand Design of our Saviour's coming into the World, as the Angels Song at his Birth doth intimate : And at his farewell, when he was taking leave of the World, how pathetically doth he pray, that his Disciples *may be One, as the Father and He are One* ! Neither did he leave them till he had Instituted, and did with them partake of the Sacrament of his Body and Blood ; which Holy Institution he appointed to remain in the Church till his coming again, for this very End, that it might be an Everlasting Badge of our Love to Him, and our Love to one another.

To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.



SERMON II.

LUKE XI. 13.

If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him ?



H O' Man be now in his Natural Condition estranged from GOD, and from that Estate of Holiness and Happiness which he was created in, and design'd to ; yet herein is his Condition not altogether deplorable, herein doth the Love of GOD exceed towards him, that he is recoverable, that he is not left without Hopes and Means of being restored both to GOD's Favour and his own Original Perfection in Holiness and Righteousness. To him GOD is pleas'd to offer terms of Reconciliation, to make himself known as a *God merciful and gracious*, willing to pardon upon his Return, and his willing Submission and Compliance with the Methods of GOD's Grace towards him. Nothing will now hinder and obstruct our Salvation, but our wilful neglect of GOD. If we die, our Destruction will be from ourselves. *Thou wilt be found inexcusable, O Man, whoever thou art, that perishest ; for GOD hath not only sent his Son for our Redemption, but in Him hath promis'd us his Spirit also. The Blood of CHRIST was shed to take away the Guilt of Sin upon our Repentance, and the Spirit of CHRIST is able to conquer the Power of Sin in us, if we be not wanting to our selves. It is Mens resisting of GOD, and of his Spirit, that lays the Foundation of their Ruin. Oh ! the many gracious Motions of GOD's Spirit that are neglected, not attended to by wilful Sinners ! So far are they*

they from waiting for the Spirit, and praying for the Spirit, that, in the Apostle's Language, they *grieve the Spirit*. They, as is said of the Lawyers and Pharisees, *Luke vii. 30. reject the Counsel of God against themselves*. It's true, these blessed Motions of the Spirit in the Hearts of Men are hidden to us, they are only known to him that hath them. We know this Divine Breath is inspir'd into Mens Minds and Hearts, but when and where we know not. Your own Consciences in this Case can and will only excuse or condemn you. You know what awakenings you have had under some cross Providence, under the fears of Death, under some more than ordinary Casualty, that makes such impressions in you, that you begin to be serious, and to have thoughts of your future State. You are conscious to yourselves when and where, and upon what occasion, God hath wrought Convictions in you, let you see the Vileness of a course of Sin, the Danger and Misery that some close and reigning Sin hath brought upon you. You know, I say, and you alone, such workings, such strivings of God within you: and your own Consciences in these Cases will both justify God, and condemn you, if they be not duly attended to, and complied with. Indeed God hath been various in the Communications of his Spirit, in the different Ages of the World, before and under the Law, and in the times of the Gospel; sufficient Measures of the Spirit did God always dispence to the Sons of Men in all these several Ages of the World; but yet different Measures, according to his own Wisdom and Goodness, and Mens improvement or not improvement of these Measures. Sometimes the Gifts of his Spirit were poured out in a Miraculous and Extraordinary manner; such were those that were communicated to *Moses* and others, at the gathering and settling of the *Jewish Church*, thereby to convince that People, that their Law and Worship did proceed from God himself; and such were those communicated to the Apostles of Christ on the Day of *Pentecost*, as so many Testimonials of their Mission from God, and of the Truth of that Doctrine which they were to teach unto the World. Thus was not God wanting in extraordinary Measures and Gifts of his Spirit, when there was need thereof, and when he saw it behoveful and necessary for his Church. But the Truth of Christianity being sufficiently attested and proved by those Miraculous Gifts granted to the first Preachers thereof, there is now no need of, or ground to expect, such extraordinary Communications. The *Enthusiasts* pretences are altogether vain and groundless. We have no Promise, and consequently no Reason to expect more extraordinary Inspirations from the Divine Spirit; those Influences of his that are now continued to his Church, are only to be had in the use of Means, the improvement of our own Faculties, Labour, and Industry, a diligent attendance upon Divine Ordinances and Institutions, and sincere and humble Addresses to God by Prayer, as we shall shew anon: By such means as these may we derive to ourselves

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such measures of Divine Grace as will make us Holy here, and Happy hereafter. The Ordinary Gifts of the Spirit are proper to all times, all Persons, and without them, Brethren, such is the Impotency and Depravedness of our Natures in this Apostate State, such is the Blindness and Deceivableness of our Minds, the Stubbornness of our Wills, so strong and prevalent with us are our Passions, so great is the influence that Carnal Interests have on us, and such Baits are Worldly Pleasures to us, that we have reason to despair of our own strength, and look out for supplies from the Divine Spirit who *sanctifieth us, and all the elect People of God*, as our Catechism well teacheth us. I know such have been the Pretences, the false and weak Pretences of some amongst us to the Spirit, that Discourses thereof are almost nauseous and unpleasing to Men otherwise sober; and that the prophane ones have hereby been harden'd in their contempt of God and his Spirit, when they find Men lay claim to this Spirit, whose Lives and Actions do manifest that they are Strangers to it. And indeed Men have been very bold with this Spirit of God, imputing the extravagancies of their own imaginations to his Blessed Inspiration, and charging their unjustifiable attempts and undertakings upon impulses derived to them from this Holy and Unerring Spirit.

But, Brethren, this ought to be no ground of wonder or of offence to us; for we are taught that *Satan* endeavours to seem, to *transform himself into an Angel of Light*; and also that God in Judgment to those that *do not entertain the light of the Truth*, leaves them to a Spirit of Delusion, to *believe Lies*. Our concernment is, That we may have the reality of what they only pretend to; that we may find the Fruits of this Spirit in our Hearts, and express them in our Lives; whilst they through Hypocrisy or Delusion deceive both themselves and others, and at last are left to the power of a contrary Spirit, a Spirit of Error, a Spirit of Wickedness. For this Spirit I am now to speak of, loves not to be impos'd upon, loves not the bold Presumptions of Men; but he dwells with the humble and contrite Ones; He is ready to them that wait for him. The reason why Men are destitute of the Spirit, are over-power'd by Sin, by the corrupt Inclinations and Motions of their own Hearts, are hurry'd away and violently carry'd on in sinful Courses, under the Dominion of reigning Sins, is not because the Spirit is not at hand to help them, not because the Spirit withdraws itself (unless upon great provocations) from them; but because they withdraw themselves from it: They will not come under the Government, and submit to the Guidance of this Divine Spirit. No, it will be found that God is not wanting to us, but we to ourselves. Our Saviour in the Words of the *Text*, doth assure us, that no earthly Parent is more desirous of his Childrens good, then God is of the good of us all: They not more willing to provide all things necessary for them, than he to supply us with all things necessary both for Body and Soul (for the word

word Spirit here may imply both) *If ye then being evil, saith he, know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* In which words are observable these Three Particulars.

(1.) *A Supposition of a natural Inclination in Men to do good to their Children.*

(2.) *A Supposition that there are, or should be those that ask of God the Holy Spirit.*

(3.) *An express Promise and Declaration of our Saviour, that God is as ready and willing upon our Prayers to give the Spirit to us, as we to give our Children any good thing they ask of us.*

(1.) *A Supposition of a Natural Inclination in Men to do good to their Children.* Tho' Man's Nature be much degenerated, tho' Men, all Men are evil, that is, sinful, and consequently have not the true Spirit of Love: Or evil, that is churlish, selfish, apt to mind only themselves, niggardly, envious, as some express it; yet so much of Natural Affection remains in them, that their Children do partake of their Care and Kindness, they are ready to preserve them from what may hurt them, and supply them, so far as they can, with all things that have a tendency to their Good. This our Saviour supposes, and this He approves of in Men, He speaks of it as a commendable Qualification in Human Nature, as that which is agreeable to Natural Principles, and to the Light of Reason, that Men should have a due regard to the Welfare of their Posterity, a fatherly Care and Affection to the Fruit of their Body, their Children. In that Catalogue of debauch'd Wretches, such as liv'd in Sins altogether contrary to the Light of Nature, to the Direction and Convictions of Natural Conscience, *Rom. i.* and the latter end, we find amongst the rest *ἄσυντοι*, such as were without Natural Affection; and that Apostle tells us elsewhere, that Men of that Temper were *worse than Infidels*. Sweetness and Tenderness, an affectionate Regard and Love to our Children, so it be regulated with Discretion and Prudence, is commendable in the Eyes and Judgment of all Wise Men, and acceptable to God Himself. God, who is Love, cannot approve that Men should be such, of such a Disposition as *Job* describes the Ostrich to be of, *Job xxxix. 13.* and so on, *She leaveth her Eggs in the Earth, and forgetteth that the Foot may crush them, or that the wild Beast may break them, she is harden'd against her young Ones, as tho' they were not hers;* and he adds a Reason of this, that God had depriv'd her of Wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her Understanding; intimating this to be a Disposition not agreeable to Rational Creatures, Creatures of Reason and Understanding. No, notwithstanding the degeneracy of Human Nature, this regard to our Children we have, our Saviour both supposes it, and approves it. That's the first Particular.

(2.) *A Supposition that there are or should be those that ask of God the Holy Spirit.* How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? You see our Saviour takes it

for granted that we do, and ought, so to do, ask the Holy Spirit of our Heavenly Father ; and we are all of us taught so to do by our Church at our daily Prayers ; *Let us beseech him to grant us true Repentance, and his Holy Spirit.* So we are to excite you in the *Absolution*. A Truth then it is, that we may and ought to pray for the Spirit ; but a Truth not well understood by some, and apt to be mistaken ; and from the mistake hereof arise the Delusions of such as pretend to new Light, new Discoveries from God of his Will to them, by Communications of his Spirit, and extraordinary Illuminations therefrom. Such Pretenders as these there have been always in the Church, from whence the Apostle thought fit to leave that Admonition or Command upon Record, which we meet with, *1 John iv. 1. Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* Some there are, no doubt, that pretend Divine Inspiration, only out of design to deceive others, to work their ends upon others, whereas they themselves know in the mean time that they are Impostors. Those are the *Wolves in sheeps cloathing*, of whom our Saviour bids us *beware, Matth. vii. 15.* these are they that by slight and cunning craftiness *lie in wait to deceive*, as the Apostle speaks, *Eph. iv. 14. that speak lies in Hypocrisie,* *1 Tim. iv. 2.* And as little doubt there is, I think, that some of these Pretenders are themselves deceived, deluded by their own Imaginations, and the workings of *Satan* ; so that they believe themselves to be what they pretend to be, acted by a Divine Spirit, when as they are under the power either of a strong Imagination, or a Satanical Delusion, or rather under both : Those are they whom God, for reasons, which we cannot always apprehend, leaves us to *strong delusions, that they should believe a Lie*, according to what we read, *2 Thess. ii. 11.* To these we may apply what *St. John* in his Revelations, saith of the *Laodiceans*, *Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, Rev. iii. 17.* Such sad and dangerous mistakes as these arise from wrong Notions and Misapprehensions of the Holy Spirit, and his Workings in the Hearts of Men ; and therefore when we speak, and you hear, or read of the Holy Spirit, both we and you are concern'd so to do with all Caution and Tendernefs, Care and Reverence. My present Business is to lead you to a right Understanding of what you pray for, when you pray for the Holy Spirit ; which you see you may, and ought to do. And in order hereunto I shall use this Method.

(1.) I shall shew that as the Spirit, so also the Holy Spirit in Scripture includes various Notions and Significations, is not always taken in the same sense.

(2.) I shall shew what we are in general to apprehend by the Holy Spirit, when we pray for it.

(3.) I shall instance in particular, What are those Fruits of the Spirit, that we are chiefly to pray for.

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(4.) I shall let you know, that these Fruits and Graces of the Holy Spirit, which we are to pray for, are no otherwise promised to us, than in the use of Means; and consequently that we are not to expect them, but by a Conscientious applying of ourselves to the use of those Means. God deals with us as Rational Creatures, and therefore expects we should make a due use of our Natural Faculties, of all Providential Occurrences, and of Divine Institutions for the acquiring both of Temporal and Spiritual Blessings.

I begin with the *First*, The various Senses the word Spirit, and Holy Spirit, is used in, in the writings both of the Old and New Testament: And as to *Spirit* without the addition of Holy, I shall only acquaint you that there are many significations thereof in the Sacred Writers, and therefore it concerns you, as you would have a right understanding of the Scripture, to look well into the Context when it occurs, before you pass judgment of the Sense thereof. Nothing doth give greater occasion of Error and Mistake, not only in this Word, but many others, than the different signification of Words and Phrases. Inconsiderate Persons are apt to put Notions upon Scripture Expressions, without attending to what either goes before or follows after, and thereby err in the Interpretation of Scripture; and as to this word Spirit, it is impossible rightly to understand St. Paul's Writings, if we have not more than ordinary care to observe how variously, and in what diverse senses it is there used: And as to the *Holy Spirit*, the word Spirit with the addition of Holy, that also admits of distinct Notions, tho' not so many, and they too more cognate to each other, especially two, (for I will be very short here.) You all, I doubt not, understand that by the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ, is signified in the first place the Eternal Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the Sacred Trinity: in this sense it is undeniably taken in the Form of Baptism prescribed by our Lord, *Baptize them, saith he to his Disciples, Matth. xxviii. 19. in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; and so it may be taken in those forementioned Phrases of *resisting the Spirit, and grieving the Spirit*; for as we argue against Socinus and his Followers, that the Spirit in such Modes of Speech cannot properly denote any Power or Attribute of God, so neither can it signify any Work or Habit of Grace in us, but rather the Author of those Graces and Work, the Person of the Holy Ghost. For it is only a Person that can be said to be resisted and grieved. But then.

Secondly, The Holy Spirit signifies not only the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity; but the *Fruits, the Gifts and Graces* communicated from this Spirit into the Hearts of Men, whether *Extraordinary or Ordinary*, whether without means, as sometimes he hath done, or in the use of them as now he doth. These are called the *Holy Spirit*, because they are from him; from

from him, yet not so but that the Father and the Son have their part in them too.: All our Gifts and Graces we owe to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that *one God who worketh all and in all.* But to help our understanding rightly to conceive the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence, it pleases God in the Scripture to attribute some Operations common to them all, to one Person in an especial manner: So the Father is said to Create, the Son to Redeem, and the Holy Ghost to Sanctifie us, though we owe all these joyntly to the Three Persons; and they to whom these, or any of these are communicated, are said to have the Spirit, as I might shew at large from Scripture, but that I must now but touch on these things. We all partake in some kind and some measure of these spiritual Gifts, and therefore may in some sense be said to have the Spirit. And from what I have said of the various acception of the Holy Spirit in the Scripture, we may learn what we pray for, when we pray for the Holy Spirit; which is the Second Particular I am to speak to. When we pray that God would give unto us the Holy Spirit, we pray that God would bless us with such Assistances and Gifts as may enable us both to work out our own Salvation, to perform the Condition on which our Eternal State depends preparing us for Heaven, and also to do our Duties in our particular Callings; that we may be Serviceable in the World, be Useful and instrumental in our Station, to the good both of ourselves and others. In both these Cases our sufficiency is from God, and therefore in both we must own him, and look up to him. In general then, they are the Gifts and Graces of God's Spirit that we must pray for, which are various and dispensed for various ends. The *Extraordinary* ones, such as were given to the Prophets and Apostles of Old, those of foretelling things to come, of working Miracles, healing Diseases, of speaking divers Languages, we have now no promise of, and consequently no ground to pray for them: but for all *Ordinary* Gifts dispensed in all Ages and Places of the World, especially the Church, we may and ought to pray for. And to clear this a little further, you are to know that these ordinary Communications of the Spirit may be reduced to Two Heads, as I have intimated just now; some are common to all Men, such as all Men in their several Conditions partake of, whether they be good or bad Men. As God *maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth rain on the Just and on the Unjust*, as we read, *Matth. v. 45.* so there are several communications of the Holy Spirit, which both good and bad partake of. We depend more on, and are more beholden to the Spirit of God, than we generally think of. *He is not far from any of us*, as the Heathen Poet quoted by *St. Paul*, could, and did, say of God. That our Minds and Natural Parts are such, that we can attain to Arts and Sciences, to Skill and Knowledge, whereby to become Useful in the World, to be Serviceable in Church and State, that we

are able with Prudence and Discretion to manage our particular Callings ; These are the Fruits and Gifts of the Divine Spirit, communicated to Men for the Good of Societies and the Benefit of the World. The more Ingenious and Useful any Man is in any Lawful Calling or Trade whatsoever, the more of the Spirit doth he partake of. These are Accomplishments that owe their Original to the Spirit ; and if we did duly consider this, we should live more both in a Dependance on God for these Abilities in our Places, and an Acknowledgment of his Goodness *that hath given such Gifts unto Men.* I might from Scripture shew you at large, how these Common Gifts are attributed to the Holy Spirit in many Instances : I will make use of but one, known I doubt not to you all, that of Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were employ'd as excellent Artists in making the Tabernacle and all the Furniture thereof, concerning whom, *Exod. xxxi. 2,* and so on, God thus speaks, *See I have call'd by Name Bezaleel the Son of Uri, &c. and I have fill'd him with the Spirit of God in Wisdom, and in Understanding, and in Knowledge, and in all manner of Workmanship, &c.* The Spirit of God you see by God Himself is declar'd to be the Author of these Gifts in Men ; Tho' alas ! how little do we take notice thereof, or own God in them ? It's true indeed, Gifts of this Nature do not render us acceptable to God, do not enstate us to an Interest in his especial Love : Make us Useful they do in this World, but do not give us a Title to an Inheritance in the other World ; and therefore they are call'd by the Schoolmen *Gratia gratis data,* but not *gratum facientes*, Graces that God freely gives to Men, but not such as make them Gracious in whom they are : No, they are common, as I said, both to good and bad. But then there are in the 2d place, such Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, that only good and holy Men partake of, because they only attend to, and close with, and give up themselves to the Obedience and Government of that Spirit, who works them in them. These indeed, are offer'd to all, we are all invited to drink of those Waters of Life freely. The Tenders of Grace in the Gospel exclude none, but such as exclude themselves, But alas ! Men have other Delights and Satisfactions which they prefer before the Graces of God's Spirit ; they shut their Eyes, and stop their Ears, and harden their Hearts against the gracious Motions of this Holy Spirit. They are in love with some darling Sin, with worldly and carnal Pleasures, and therefore these Sanctifying Graces of the Spirit they mind not, desire not ; they slight, they reject them Faith and Hope, and Charity and Repentance, Patience and Humility, a constant Fear and Reverence of God, and a desire of pleasing Him, and to be made like Him, a denying of ourselves, and an humble Dependance upon God, and Submission to his Will ; these they are strangers to. And tho' God by his Spirit draws near to them, declares his willingness that they should not perish ; yet alas ! they turn their Backs on Him, stifle all holy Operations in their
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very beginning, that lead to their Sanctification. These great Things upon which their Salvation depends, are not regarded by them. They are, and they will be, strangers to those Fruits of the Spirit I now speak of, those that accompany Salvation, those that the Holy Spirit of God by a blessed and powerful Operation doth work in the Hearts of holy and good Men, who open their Souls to this Heavenly Guest, entertain with gladness these Divine Motions, whereby they are regenerated to a participation of the Divine Nature, renew'd and sanctify'd, preserv'd in Holiness here, and prepar'd and reserv'd for Glory hereafter. These Sanctifying Graces of the Spirit, I say, are generally neglected and disregarded by Men, tho' they be chiefly to be sought after, They are chiefly the Holy Spirit we are to pray for. And so I am come to the *Third* Thing to be spoken to in this Particular, those especial Fruits and Graces of the Holy Spirit, which we are to ask of our Heavenly Father; And they are those last mention'd, those that lead to our own Salvation, to the sanctifying of our Natures, to the renewing of the Image of God in us, and making us *holy as He is holy*, to the killing and mortifying the Power of Sin, and all carnal and worldly Affections: These are the blessed and glorious Fruits which this Holy Spirit works in the Hearts of good Men, and which we all are concern'd, as we expect Heaven and Happiness, mainly and in the first place to mind and seek after, and unfeignedly and continually to beg at the Hands of our Heavenly Father. It's true, we may, and ought to pray for those other *common* Fruits of the Spirit, whereby we may be fitted for that particular Calling in which Providence hath set us, whereby we may be Useful in the World either in a Private or Publick Capacity. Proper Gifts there are of the Spirit, that qualify Men for publick Service in the Church and in the State, for the Magistrates and for the Ministers, for those that are intrusted with Sacred or Civil Employments; and those they must and ought to pray for, who are by God or Men; or rather both, call'd to such Employments; for it is this Spirit that enables them for the discharge of such beneficial Services. God who is the great Founder both of Religious and Civil Societies, who hath made Men to be mutual Helps to one another, both in things of Spiritual and Temporal Concernment, who expects from them a joynt concurrence, and mutual assistance in all things relating either to the Good of those several Communities whereof they are Members, or of that publick Worship and Service we all owe to Himself; He, I say, doth furnish Men with those Communications of his Spirit, which render them able for the Management of such weighty Affairs. God's Glory is concern'd much in the well-ordering and governing of Publick Societies; and therefore his Providence takes Care that there be Persons qualify'd for the Support and Preservation of them. Magistrates and Ministers are his special Instruments in the Government of Mankind; by these He carries
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on the great Ends of communicating his Goodness to us both here and hereafter; and therefore hath He a special Regard to them, and by more than ordinary Dispensations of his Spirit, doth He stand by them and assist them; which Dispensations of the Spirit fitting them for the discharge of their Duties, both they themselves, and all others of the same Community with them, are concern'd to beg at the Hands of God for them. It is excellent to observe, how both in the Old and New Testament the Abilities which qualify'd Men for Sacred or Civil Offices, are in an especial manner attributed to the Spirit of GOD. When there were Seventy Persons to be chosen to assist *Moses* in the Government of the Tribes of *Israel*, see how GOD speaks to *Moses* concerning them, *Numb. xi. 17. I will come down and talk with thee there, and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them, &c.* GOD himself, you see, both owns that Spirit, a Spirit of Government which was in *Moses*, to be from himself, and also promises now to communicate it to the Seventy Elders. And how well GOD took it at the hands of *Solomon*, when he ask'd above all things Wisdom for the Management of the Kingly Office, you all know. The whole Story is very well worth your reading; you have it *1 Kings iii. 5*, and so on. Should I now proceed to the Sacred Offices of the Prophets in the *Jewish Church*, and the Apostles and their Successors in the *Christian*, and shew how the Spirit of GOD was given, and is promis'd in an especial manner to them for the Use and Good of the Church, I should, I fear, prevent myself, and therefore shall omit that. I only add here, That as there are proper Gifts to Men of *publick* Places, which they may and ought to beg from GOD, when they are employ'd in such Places; so there are also Gifts proper to Men of more *private* Condition, which in their several Stations they may and are concern'd to look up unto GOD for, that they may, be serviceable and discharge their Duties, in that Rank GOD hath set them, with Prudence and with a good Conscience. But notwithstanding those common Gifts, whether of publick or private Persons, in their Places to be desir'd, there are other Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, which both publick and private Men are principally to make the Matter of their Requests to GOD, the Sanctifying Graces of his Spirit. The other we may have, and yet want these. We may be serviceable to the World, and to the Church too, and yet perish at last ourselves. That wise Prince, *Solomon*, who had such large measures of other sorts of Gifts, as never any One had (as you have read) yet how sadly he did degenerate, we may with Astonishment read in the sequel of his Story. Divines do question, and they may well do it, what to say as to his Eternal Condition: Some Hopes and GuesSES we may have of his Recovery and Repentance, because that Book of the *Ecclesiastes* was wrote by him in his Old-age, wherein something may be

gather'd, to give us ground for such Hopes: But such were his Sins, and of that high Nature and Measure, that I should not more admire his Wisdom, than his Repentance, if I were assur'd of it. Without a sanctify'd Heart, alas! all other Gifts and Accomplishments will be so far from rendering us acceptable to GOD, that they will but aggravate our Sins, and further our Condemnation. Talents not improv'd will demonstrate us but idle and slothful Servants, and justly provoke to displeasure our Master that entrusted us with them. It was sad News to the *Rich Man* in the Gospel, who had been getting and hoarding up a great Estate for many Years, and for any thing we read, by his own Care, and Industry, and Prudence, and well Management of his Affairs, without any base ways of Gain, any Fraud or Cheats, any Over-reaching or Oppression of any (his Fault seems to have been not so much in a wrong getting, as a wrong employing, or not employing his Estate) sad News, I say, it was to him to hear, that *this Night thy Soul shall be taken from thee*. And why so? Why alas! he had Parts and Wit, and Skill enough for his outward Concernments. He could manage his Lands well; for its said, *his Ground brought forth plentifully*. So that no doubt he had good Skill in Husbandry in his private Calling; He wanted not those common Gifts of the Spirit; but yet for all this he had no sense of GOD, or of the Concernments of his Soul; and therefore the Tydings of Death must needs wound him, kill him before he dy'd. What little sense he had of GOD, or of his Eternal State, we may apprehend from those sottish Words of his, *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry*. This Story I insist on the rather, because of that useful Inference, and full to my Purpose, which the Evangelist St. Luke, who relates the Story, makes in the 21st verse of his 12th Chapter, So, saith he, *is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards GOD*. Oh, those Gifts that will make us rich towards GOD, are they we are chiefly to prize and value, to seek and pray for! It is a broken and a contrite Heart, in the Prophet's phrase, a Heart tender of Sin, it is a *hungring and thirsting after Righteousness*, in our Lord's Expression. It is according to St. Paul, Eph. iv. 22, and so on, to put off, concerning the former Conversation, the Old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lust, and to be renew'd in the Spirit of your Mind: and that ye put on the New Man, which after GOD is created in Righteousness and true Holiness. And this same Apostle gives you another large Catalogue of these Graces, which you are chiefly to pray for and endeavour after, in that known place, Gal. v. 22, 23. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*. How far, Brethren, these Blessed Fruits are the Matter of your Requests unto GOD. I must leave to your own Consciences. With what Sincerity, Constancy and Fervency, you seek to GOD for this Holy Spirit,

Spirit, You and GOD only know. He that searcheth the Heart, knows your Prayers too. He knows and sees all your Religious Addresses in private and in publick: He knows what the Inclinations of your Spirits, and the Endeavours of your Lives chiefly tend to.

It remains that in the Fourth Place, I let you know that these Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit are no otherwise promis'd to us, or to be expected by us, than in the use of Means; tho' GOD worketh them in us, yet He expects that we should exert our own Faculties, make use of all Means that He hath appointed for us. GOD in all his Communications both of *Common* and *Special* Graces, requires our Concurrence and Compliance with Him. Notwithstanding it is GOD that *worketh in us*, yet are we to *work out our own Salvation*. And it is a good Argument to us to set upon this Work, in that we have assurance both of his Preventing and Assisting Grace. He puts good Resolutions into our Minds, and He will enable us to bring them to perfection, if we be not ourselves slothful and negligent. Wise and Prudent Men are very vigilant and ready to take all Occasions to better their Condition in the World, to effect their worldly Designs, to accomplish their Undertakings in the purchase of Honour and Preferment, of Riches and Estates, of Pleasures and other outward Enjoyments. In these Things Men have that Prudence, as puts them to use all their utmost Endeavours for the procurement of them. They both awaken and set on work their own Abilities, and they call in the Help and Assistance of such as may be in a Capacity to promote their desir'd Ends. And are we so ambitious to be look'd upon as *Wise* in these *Temporal* Affairs; and are we willing to be esteem'd *Fools* in the management of our *Spiritual* State? If you have such commendable Parts as make you Useful in this World, and render you able to manage *worldly Business* to your Credit and Advantage, doth not GOD expect that you should use the same Parts in order to your *Spiritual Good*? I do not intend here to launch into Controversy: No, we need not. Would we but look into our own Consciences, we might soon be satisfy'd that we have had more Opportunities and Means of Grace, than we have had Hearts to make use of. We might soon be satisfy'd that we are *wise to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge*; that is, lay out our Parts and Strength either in Things plainly wicked, or at least less advantageous to us, when in the mean while, Things of Eternal Concernment we never mind, never employ our Parts, or Thoughts, or Time about them: As tho' Men were resolv'd, GOD should Save them whether they will or no, or else they will be content to perish. To *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, they love not; such Doctrines are displeasing to them. If GOD will do to them, as our Lord did to the *impotent Man* that lay at the *Pool of Bethesda*, heal them, convert them in a Moment, they are content; but to *wait for*

the Descent of an Angel to trouble the Waters, this they like not of. Whereas the Soul truly sensible of its Misery by Sin, and of the absolute Necessity of the Influences of this Holy Spirit to subdue the Prevalency thereof, is willing to go GOD's Way, to exert its utmost Strength, and use all Means and Opportunities whereby it may be made partaker of these Divine Assistances. Which Assistances are gradually dispens'd to the humble Soul, and in that Method, that the Soul itself cannot discern these Operations of the Spirit, but the Effects of them. No, how and when, and in what manner the Spirit works in the Hearts of Men, we know not; but the Effects thereof will be discernable. Where we see Heavenly Dispositions wrought in the Hearts of Men; when we see them *walk not after the Flesh, fulfilling the Lusts thereof, but after the Spirit*: When we see these Sanctifying Graces of the Spirit, I mention'd, appear in Mens Lives, then we know they have this Holy Spirit; tho' neither we, nor perhaps they themselves, know the time when these were wrought in them; neither need they be solicitous about it. Look thou beest renew'd and sanctify'd, and let it not trouble thee tho' thou canst not tell when this Holy Spirit first took possession of thy Soul. This Heavenly Dew falls in the Night, and is not discernable in its illapses; but yet it so refreshes and revives the Soul, that it makes it fruitful in all Good Works, and we know it by the Effects of it upon the Heart. Be thou constant therefore in waiting upon GOD in his own Way: Use the Means, *Seek and thou shalt find, ask and it shall be given thee, knock and the Gate shall be open'd*. And so I should proceed to the 3d and last Observable in the Text, The express Promise and Declaration of our Saviour, that GOD is as ready and willing upon our Prayers to give the Spirit to us, as we to give our Children any good Thing they ask of us. Brethren, we have no reason to have hard Thoughts of GOD; yet there is never a wicked Man but esteems Him his Enemy. Though the whole Gospel be a Demonstration of GOD's Love to Mankind, yet who believes that GOD hath that Love to us, that Parents have to their Children? In the Prosecution of this Truth, I should have occasion to instance in the particular Means whereby, and wherein, we are to expect this Holy Spirit; for you see *Prayer* is express'd in the Text, as being one special Means. But this Last Particular I must wholly omit the Time being spent.

What remains therefore, but that we beg of GOD, *To grant us true Repentance and his Holy Spirit, that the rest of our Life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last, we may come to his Eternal Joy, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be Glory for ever.*



SERMON III.

LUKE XI. 13.

If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him ?



HAVE for my present Labour resumed a Portion of Scripture, which you may remember I made use of not long since in this Place. The Words of my *Text*, are the Words of our Blessed Lord himself, part of His Excellent Sermon upon the Mount, as more plainly appears by the parallel place in *St. Matthew*, by whom we have the whole Sermon recorded together, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th. Chapters of his Gospel ; whereas *St. Luke* gives us an account thereof by several Parcels, and upon several Occasions. Our Lord's design is to assure us of GOD's Fatherly Care over us, of His readiness to supply us with all Good things, *all things necessary both to Life and Godliness*, as the Apostles expressions are, both for our Souls and our Bodies, our present and our Future State. Did we but live under a due Sense of GOD, we should have no ground for Complaints, for Murmurings. We do not serve so hard a Master, but that we may rest assured, that He will provide for us sufficiently, sufficiently reward us. It is Ignorance of GOD, and Distrust of His Providence and Care over us, that lays the Foundation of all discontented, all disquieting and repining Thoughts. Whatever may be pretended to be the reason of inward Discontent, of hard Thoughts of GOD, and His Providential Dispensations, it would all vanish, appear to be groundless and unreasonable,

sonable, did we but heartily and sincerely believe what our blessed Saviour asserts, that GOD Almighty hath the same Care for our Good, that Earthly Parents have for the Good of their Children; yea, far more, as He here intimates, and as GOD himself by his Prophet declareth, *Isa. xlix. 15. Can a Woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget you.* This is a plain and clear Declaration of Almighty GOD; and yet, Brethren, who is there amongst us that believeth it? We are suspicious of GOD, tho' every moment we experience his Goodness; or if not suspicious, yet are we regardless of Him, tho' we live wholly upon him, tho' He alone be the Author of all our Enjoyments, both our Creator and our Preserver, who gave us our Beings, and preserves us in them; for we are both the *Work of his hands, and the sheep of his pasture.* So near is Almighty GOD to us, so mindful of us, and yet, alas! how far do we set Him from us, how little do we take notice of him! That ancient Complaint of GOD, by the Prophet *Isaiah*, in the beginning of his Prophecy, is yet, alas! too true in reference to us: *I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me. The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* No; it is a sign, an undeniable Argument, we do not consider that we are under the Care of a good and gracious GOD, while there are Complaints in our Mouths, or Repinings in our Breasts against any of his Providences, whatsoever they be. GOD no way deserves it at our hands, that we should have hard Thoughts of Him, question his Goodness, his willingness to help us. You take it ill from your Children, and you have reason so to do, when they suspect your Love and Kindness, when, notwithstanding your Labour and Care for their Good, they yet are full of Complaints against you, or entertain unworthy Thoughts of you, as being wanting in your Paternal Affection towards them. This is very bad in itself, and must needs be ungrateful to you. The Case is the same, Brethren, betwixt GOD and us, did we well consider it. He is, and he owns himself to be the Father of us all; and therefore to doubt of his Fatherly Regard to us, must needs be very sinful in us, and very displeasing to Him. Neither do we only hereby rob GOD of that Honour, those Acknowledgments, which are due to him from us; but also deprive ourselves of those Comforts, which would compose and refresh our Spirits in all Conditions. *In the multitude of our Thoughts within us, these Comforts would delight our Souls, as they did the holy Psalmist's.* It is our not considering, or not believing the Relation wherein we stand to GOD, and He to us, that lays the Foundation of all disquieting Thoughts. It is no wonder that Men who live without God in the World, who will not be sensible of, not believe his willingness to supply them with whatever is in truth for their Good, should live unquiet and disconsolate Lives. Every little Disappointment, every inconsiderable Cross, raises Tempests in such a Man's Breast, makes him

him disconsolate, melancholy, and fretful: Whereas he that lives under constant and fresh Apprehensions of God's Providence over him, and all his Affairs and Concernments, hath something to support and satisfy him in all Occurrences whatever. Neither will Prosperity render him loose and careless, be an occasion to him of Pride or Haughtiness, swell him with high Thoughts of himself, and contemptuous thoughts of others; nor will Adversity and Disappointments so far depress and burden his Spirit as to render him comfortless, or fill him with fretful Apprehensions, and unworthy Thoughts either of GOD or Men: Nay, he can bless GOD in all Conditions, own and acknowledge his Wisdom and Goodness, as well when he thinks fit to afflict and chastise him, as when he more sensibly smiles upon him, and answers his Desires to the full. He knows, and rests assured, that nothing befalls him but from the Hand and Direction of GOD, who knows what is good for him, better than he doth himself; And if he deny him the desire of his Soul, and the Request of his Lips, he concludes, that this Denial proceeds not from want of any kindness in GOD towards him, but because GOD sees that the satisfying of his desire herein would be rather for his hurt than for his Good. Thus do due and worthy Apprehensions of GOD guard the Soul against all Despondencies, and render all GOD's Dispensations welcome and grateful to us, and quite banish out of our Souls all Querelousness and Discontent. I shall therefore endeavour to let you understand, how much GOD Almighty is concern'd for your Good; that we are no less under the care of GOD, than Children are under the care of their Parents. Tho' we do not see GOD, neither can we with bodily Eyes, for he dwells in Light inaccessible, yet he is not far from any of us. The Wisdom, Power and Goodness of GOD, are all managed with reference to our Happiness. GOD hath us always in his Thoughts, tho' we are apt to put the thoughts of him far from us. GOD never was, he is not now, neither will he ever be wanting in promoting the Salvation of Mankind: So far as becomes a Wise and an Holy GOD, He did always and ever will interpose for the reducing of Men from a State of Sin and Misery, to a Condition of Holiness and Happiness. Man's Misery is the sole Result of his own Neglect and Folly, for were he as ready to hearken unto GOD's Call, as GOD is to hearken to his Prayers: He would find an undeniable Truth in what our Saviour asserts in the Words of my Text. *If ye then being evil, &c.*

I have already so much enlarg'd upon the Design of our Saviour in these Words, and consequently upon what must be my Design in them, To set forth GOD's Fatherly Care over us, and his readiness to supply us with all good things; that there is nothing more needful to be spoken for the Explication of them.

I shall only in brief shew you how far we proceeded heretofore in the Consideration of them, and so proceed to what remains.

Three

Three Particulars you may please to remember we took notice of in the Words. (1.) *A supposal of that Natural Inclination that is in Men to do good to their Children.* Though Mans Nature be much degenerated, yet so much of Natural Affection remains in them, that their Children partake of their Care and Kindness: that they are ready to preserve them from Evil, and to supply them with all things tending to their Good: This our Saviour supposes, and approves of as a commendable Qualification in Human Nature, as that which is agreeable to natural Principles, and the Light of Reason; that Men should have a Fatherly Care and Affection for the Fruit of their Body, their Children. A (2d.) Observable from the Words is this, *That we may, and ought to pray for the Spirit.* Where by Prayer we are to understand the use of all our Faculties and Endeavours, of all the Means that GOD hath appointed whereby to communicate his Goodness to us. We must *ask*, if we would *receive*; we must *seek*, if we would *find*; we must *knock*, if we expect it should be *open'd* to us. Tho' GOD be *Free* in the Dispensations of his Goodness, yet he justly expects we should seek it at his Hands, and put forth our own strength in a conscientious Use of all Means that tend to the procuring thereof. We have no ground to expect either Temporal or Spiritual Blessings from GOD, otherwise than in the Use of Means. This Observation was the chief Matter of my Discourse before, when I proceeded therein on these Particulars: (1) How variously the Scripture makes use of this Word *Spirit* and the *Holy Spirit*. (2.) What were those Graces of the Spirit which we are chiefly to pray for, to wit, the *Sanctifying* Graces of the Spirit, that we might *work out our own Salvation*, as the Apostle expresses it; that GOD having done so much for our Eternal Salvation, we might not by our own Neglect come short thereof. There are *common* Gifts of the Spirit, whereby we are enabled for the Duties of our particular Callings, which in due place we may and ought to pray for; but our greatest Care is to be had over our Souls, and we are chiefly to endeavour that we may be Holy, and thereby fitted for an Everlasting Enjoyment of GOD: And therefore to these Words in my Text our Saviour presently subjoins in St. Matthew, *Strive to enter in at the Strait Gate.* (3.) I shew'd you, *Those Means wherein GOD ordinarily communicates the Graces of the Spirit to us.* A principal one whereof is *Prayer*, which is therefore here only mention'd.

The *Third* Particular observable in the Text, I could not then meddle with, and therefore intend it now for the Subject of my present Discourse; which indeed, as I have intimated, is chiefly both intended and express'd therein, the other being only suppos'd. And it is this:

3. *That GOD hath a Fatherly Care over us, and is both willing and ready to supply us with all Good Things.* I say, *All Good Things*; for tho' in the Text, the *Spirit* is only express'd, by which may be

be meant only Spiritual Good Things; such Assistances and Influences of his Grace as are necessary to the Salvation of our Souls; yet St. *Matthew's* Expressions in the parallel place to my Text, *Matth. vii. 11.* are more extensive, and seem to comprehend in them not only *Spiritual*, but *Temporal* Blessings also; *How much more, saith he, shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him.* It's good Things in general, good Things of all Kinds; What is really and in truth good for us, GOD is ready to dispense even of *outward* Mercies. Indeed we are apt as to those Things, those *outward* Things, to desire what is really for our Hurt, and therefore in such Cases it is an Argument of GOD's Love to deny us our Requests. We may rest assur'd, that GOD knows better than we ourselves what is good for us, and therefore in our pursuit of these Things, we are to acquiesce in His Wisdom, and we have all Assurance that GOD will not be wanting to us, as to these Things, in such as are really good for us in our Capacity, in our Condition. Riches and Honours, and great Estates, and worldly Delights, they are things not *Good* in themselves, but in order to a further End; and to them that do not use them to a right End, they are Curses rather than Blessings: And therefore we have no absolute Promises as to these Things, and GOD's Denial of them to us, is no Argument that He is not mindful of us. So much of them as is really for our Good, we may expect at his Gracious Hands, if we be Industrious and Careful, and Conscientious in the Place He hath set us in. Extreme Poverty and Beggery is the Fruit of Sloth and Idleness, of a neglect of our own Faculties and Opportunities, of Profuseness, and Ill-management of Affairs. Were not Men wanting to themselves, we should not hear of Complaints even as to those Things. Should any extraordinary Providence bring us to a low Condition, as Casualties by Fire, or Water, Sickness, or the like; in such Cases GOD's Providence can find out Ways for our just Supplies, if we with Submission rely on Him. And tho' the *Phanomina* of Providence in these Cases, GOD's visible Dispensations in these Outward Things, seems sometimes obscure, and we cannot give an Account of them; yet if we do but turn our Eyes upon ourselves, and seriously consider, what it is we do or can deserve at the Hands of GOD, we shall find sufficient ground to silence all Murmurings and Repinings against GOD in the worst that befalls us: Nay, we shall have abundant Matter for Extolling and Admiring GOD in the large Provision He hath made for us, even as to Outward Enjoyment, and with the holy *Psalmist* cry out, *O that Men would praise the LORD for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men.* It is to this Fatherly Care of GOD towards us, that we owe all the Comforts of this Life: We live wholly upon GOD's Provision, and are Daily fed at his Table. Yet, alas! who of us lives under a constant Sense of this our Dependance upon GOD? We challenge the Creatures as our own, and never consider who it is that created

and preserves them for our Use ; who it is that blesses them to us, gives not only *us* Power to apply them to our Use, but *them* Power to nourish, refresh, and be serviceable to us. There is a great Truth in those Words that our Lord us'd in his Discourse with the Devil, *Matth. iv. 4. Man doth not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of GOD* : Whereby is intimated, that it is from the Blessing of GOD, and by His Appointment, that our Ordinary Food hath the Power to Cherish and Sustain us; and where that is wanting, GOD would feed and uphold us by other Means, as He did the *Israelites* by *Manna* in the Wilderness; upon which Miraculous Providence of His, those Words were first spoken as we may see, *Deut. viii. 3.* So vastly are we wanting in owning and acknowledging GOD in these *Common Mercies*, as we call them, which are the sole Results of GOD's Care over us, and his Fatherly Regard to us; that it would not be unsuitable to the *Text* to put Men in mind how much they are beholden to GOD for them, and depend solely upon Him for, and in the Use of them. But there are other Good Things of greater Concernment to us, that relate not only to our Bodies but our Souls, not only to this Life, but to a Future Life, an Eternal Life, which we intend chiefly to speak to, and to shew, That even as to these Things, GOD hath made rich and ample Provision for us. GOD hath not only spread forth the Earth, and furnish'd it for us, for our Use, but hath open'd Heaven to us also. His Care over us is correspondent to our Needs, to our Capacities; and they are Spiritual Mercies that we most want; They alone can satisfy our Spirits. These Outward Enjoyments would never give true Peace and solid Satisfaction to us that are Rational Creatures, and bear an Impress of GOD upon our Souls; they are Things of an higher Nature that must make us Happy. And even these Things, Spiritual Mercies, GOD is ready to communicate to us; As He is the Father not only of our Bodies, but of our Spirits, so hath he made abundant Provision for Both. *If you being Evil know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give, What? the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.* So saith the *Text* expressly; and that by the *Holy Spirit* here, are meant all Spiritual Supplies, all those Divine Assistances and Influences that promote our Salvation, that tend to the Renewing and Sanctifying of our Natures, and preparing us for an Heavenly Life; all the Sanctifying Graces of the Holy Spirit of GOD, I have heretofore largely shewn. My present Business will be to evince the Truth of what is here Asserted, That GOD is willing and ready to supply us with these Divine Blessings. Brethren, our Eternal Salvation is the main Business of Heaven; To recover us lost Creatures to a State of Holiness and Happiness, is the great Design that GOD hath ever had since our first Apostacy from Him. We have indeed lost ourselves, but such is the Infinite Mercy of GOD, that He is ready, and such the Condescension of our Blessed

Blessed Saviour, that He *came* down from Heaven to *seek and to save those that were lost*. Nothing can now obstruct our Salvation, but our own wilful Impenitency. If we be willing to return, GOD is willing to receive us to Mercy. GOD is reconcileable to Sinners, and this His Reconcilableness will render all impenitent Sinners unexcusable. GOD (as I said) hath used, and doth use all the Means that becomes an Holy and a Wise GOD for the Eternal Salvation of Mankind ; so that if any of us perish, our Destruction will be the Fruit of our own doings. He sets before us Life and Death ; If we wilfully chuse the Paths that lead to Death and Misery, GOD will be Righteous in our Condemnation. Men are apt to complain, that they want Opportunities, they want Means, they want Grace ; otherwise they would be more Holy, they would live better Lives, would not give way to such and such Sins. I have such Temptations, saith one ; such Provocations, saith another ; and that's the Reason that Lust and Passion so prevail in me. Thus do Men delude their own Souls, and seek to excuse their Evil-doings : When alas ! they trifle away their happy Opportunities ; They withdraw themselves from, and carelessly neglect the Means that GOD plentifully affords them : They fill their Thoughts and Hearts with their earthly, their worldly Concernments, and render themselves harden'd against all the Motions of GOD's Spirit, all the Admonitions and Warnings of GOD's Messengers, and so become barren and unfruitful, notwithstanding all the Divine Influences of Grace, go on in Sin, known Sin, from Day to Day. This, this is the Ground of Mens Misery, this the Ruin of Souls, this is the Reason we see so many live and dye in Sin. Our Saviour in the known Parable of the King that made a Marriage for his Son, *Matth. xxii.* doth plainly lay open Mens Carriage in this Case, how strangely they slight GOD's Call, and His Invitations, how they are not afraid to pretend other Concernments ; nay, to cry out against, and spitefully to intreat those that were sent to them to invite them. Strange it is to consider this ! And yet, Brethren, it were no hard matter to shew the Truth of such Carriage against GOD's gracious Offers, and His Invitations, from Instances even amongst ourselves, We are not, we cannot be altogether unacquainted, how GOD and His Messengers are entertain'd by several sorts of Men. If we let them not alone in their Sins, we are to Busy, take more upon us, than becomes us, than we ought. What ? Men are not to be forc'd in Religion ; Consciences are free. Is it so indeed ? Are Consciences altogether Free ? Tell me then, I pray you, the meaning of these Words in that Parable of the *Marriage-Feast*, as St. *Luke* relates it, *Chap. xiv. 23. Compel them to come in, that my House may be full.* I say, What is the meaning of these Words, if Men that pretend Conscience, must be left to do what they please ? And I urge here farther, That when GOD calls you into his House, its but a sad Answer, to say, That you are not prepar'd.

What if GOD cuts you off before you have another Call another Opportunity? They were the *Foolish Virgins* that had Oyl to buy, when the Bridegroom knock'd, and they far'd accordingly; notwithstanding their Pretence of being not *Prepared*, of having no Oyl in their Lamps, the Consequence was sad, *the Door was shut*, and they for ever left out. Such an Instance methinks, should awaken Men that pretend to be serious in Religion; and rather, because it was no less a Person than our Saviour himself that spoke those Parables, both that of the *Marriage-Feast*, and that of the *Foolish Virgins*. And there is a further Passage, in that of the *Marriage-Supper*, very considerable in this Case, when Men propose their unpreparedness as an Excuse for their Neglect of hearkening to GOD's Call, and of using the Means that He hath appointed for the communicating of His Grace and Spirit to them: Amongst those that were gather'd together from the High-ways, there was One that came not having a *Wedding-Garment*. But what then? Were the Messengers blam'd that did call him, and admit him, because he was unprepared? Or were those that came in together with him, the less accepted by GOD upon this Account, because he came along with them, and did partake of the same Means? No such thing. No? to him alone was that Sentence pronounc'd, *Bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away and cast him into utter Darkeness*: Neither had he any thing to say in defence of his Unpreparedness, or against this sad Doom for it is said expressly, that *he was speechless*. We do not advise you, Brethren, to attend upon GOD's Sacred Institutions with unprepared and unsanctify'd Hearts; No; we look upon you as *Christians*, and as such, we are, and must be urgent with you, not to neglect your Duty; and if notwithstanding your Professions you want such inward Qualifications, such *Wedding-Garments*, as become these Holy Solemnities, we must leave you to judge; Neither will He impute it to you as a Sin, and thereupon Sentence you, that you came; but that you came unprepared: Your Coming is your Duty; your Fault and your Sin is your Unpreparedness; which is, with GOD's Assistance, in your own Power to remedy. For I know no Unpreparedness, where there is a sincere, humble, penitent Heart, which you profess by and in your very Coming. And therefore we have ground to hope well of you, and you to hope well from God, while you have a Care to walk answerable to this your Profession, and according to your Promise here, *Lead a new Life, from henceforth walking in His Holy Ways*. This you may rest assur'd of, GOD waits to be Gracious, He is ready to accept of all Returning and Penitent Sinners; He hath a Fatherly Care over us, both as to our Bodies and our Souls. Our Saviour assures us in the *Text*, that He is ready to give to us the *Spirit*; that is, all Things tending to the Salvation of our Souls. And this I am now to Prove and Demonstrate to you; and that I shall do upon these *Three General Grounds*:

(1.) GOD hath implanted in us *Naturally* a Knowledge of Himself and His Will ; We have a *Natural Law* imprinted upon our Souls, on purpose to lead us to GOD, and to Eternal Happiness ; we have a *Light of Conscience* within us, and are able to discern what is Good and what is Evil ; what is acceptable to GOD, and what is otherwise. The main Principles of Religion are Legible by the Law of our Nature, are engraven upon our Hearts *That which may be known of God is manifest in us*, as the Apostle St. Paul excellently expresses it, Rom. i. 19, 20. *The invisible things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead ;* And from hence he concludes, that even the Heathens in their Idolatry, and other Impieties were *without excuse*. That's the *First* way therefore whereby GOD leads Men to Salvation.

(2.) In all Ages of the World GOD hath according to His Wisdom *Revealed* His Will to Mankind in order to their Salvation, by extraordinary Ways and Methods, by His Angels, by His Prophets, and lastly by His Son.

(3.) GOD affords daily Influences of *Light and Strength* from his Spirit to the minds and hearts of Good Men. He enlightens their Souls, quickens their Affections, enables them to withstand Temptations, to subdue Lust, suggest Heavenly Thoughts, raises in them Longings and Thirstings after Holiness, a Delight in GOD and in the ways of GOD. Such blessed Operations are by the help of GOD's Spirit effected in Holy and Good Men. And were we all Conscientious in the use of Divine Institutions, did we *knock and seek and ask*, we might all in our Measures, according to our Place experience such Assurances from GOD. The Text is express as to this particular, and may chiefly by Spirit intimate those occasional Influences, or habitual Graces of the Spirit in the Hearts of Good Men ; though I, you see, enlarge it to all the Methods of GOD in reference to Mens Salvation, all the Instances wherein GOD manifests His fatherly Care for our Eternal Good ; and I choose to do so, that Men seeing how mindful GOD is of them, may seriously consider how utterly inexcusable they will be that neglect or resist all GOD's Methods for their good. The particulars that I have mention'd are all of them, of great Concernment and large Extent ; but the Time will give me leave only to touch upon them.

I begin with the *First*.

(1.) GOD hath manifested his Love and Care in reference to our Eternal Salvation, in that *He hath imprinted upon our Souls naturally a knowledge of himself, and his will*. A sense of a Divine Being, and an Honour due thereto from us, a distinction betwixt Good and Evil, Vertuous and Base Actions, these are things which Human Nature leads us to. Reason and Religion are so twisted together in our Natures, that we cannot approve our selves Rational Creatures, without some inclinations and tendencies to Religion. Did Men live up to the Dictates of their own Consciences, to the Light of natural Reason, to the free and easy suggesti-

suggestions of an unprejudiced Mind; those would lead them in a great measure to the practical part of Christianity. Natural Light cannot but approve the excellency of the Precepts of the Gospel. Indeed the Doctrine of CHRIST relating to our Practice, is but Morality improv'd; and therefore they that speak against Morality, understand not what Christianity is; For Christianity is the highest Morality, the most perfect Body of Moral Duties, that ever the World was acquainted with; and no wonder, for our Saviour saith, that He came not to destroy the Law, but to perfect and compleat it, fulfil it, as we Translate it. The Law of Nature, and the Moral part of the Jewish Law which is the same, is of an Eternal Obligation, can never be cancelled; it is from the same GOD that the Gospel itself is, and its design was the same with the Gospel; its first design was; I say the Law of Nature in its first Tendency and Design from GOD, was the same with that of the Gospel, to be the measure of our Duty, and our Guide to Happiness. Our Lord indeed hath furnished us with a more perfect Rule, with a more sure Guide, (as I shall shew anon;) But this Natural Light, this Light of Conscience will be the Condemnation of the greatest part of Mankind, yea of Christians too, its to be fear'd. My meaning is, that many professing Christianity, live in the practice of those Sins, which the Light of Nature tells us are damning Sins. *Be not deceived, saith the Apostle, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, &c. nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.* The Apostle saith so indeed; But, Brethren, doth not the very Law of Nature say the same? Are not such Sinners as these condemned also in the Hearts and Consciences of all sober Men? We need not the Light of the Gospel to give Sentence against such Sinners. And are there no such that go under the Profession of Christianity? Neither are these the only Sinners that Natural Reason condemns; there are others that look upon themselves as Christians of an higher Rank than ordinary, whose Principles and Practices, if they be well examined, will be found to be such as are contrary to the Light of Nature; Proud, Censorious, Contemners of Lawful Magistrates, Disturbers of Christian Churches and States, Revilers of such as are set over them by the Laws both of GOD and Men. Can such justify themselves, or say they do not violate the very Laws of Nature, by which Societies are founded and preserved, both in their Religious and Civil Concerns? Would Men be perswaded to lay aside their Prejudices, their Passions, their private Interests, their priding themselves in being taken notice of as considerable in some Party, and Popular Faction; were but such things laid aside, which debauch Mens Minds, and hinder them from having right Apprehensions and right Judgments of things; it were impossible but that Men of mean Capacities, giving due Attendance to the dictates of right Reason, should easily see that to give Liberty to Fanatical

cal Pretenders, to *Reformed Churches and States*, is the readiest way to banish, not only Religion out of the World, but all Civility and Humanity too. A little attendance to Sober Reason will shew the Falseness of all those Principles of such as disturb our Church and State; Those bold Revilers of our truly Apostolical Church, (perhaps the best constituted Church in the Christian World) whom the Apostle, you see, ranks among the most Prophane, amongst those of most prostituted Principles and Practices. So that we are not so devoid even by Nature of the Knowledge of GOD and His Will, but that thereby we might be taught our Duty, and in a great measure led unto Happiness; did we duly give heed to that Law, which GOD hath writ upon the Tables of all our Hearts. It's true by habitual Sinning the even natural Notions of Good and Evil may be almost blotted out. Sad experience attests this, not only in the Heathen World, but in Christian Societies, GOD hath justly, and may justly leave Men to a *Reprobate mind*: But blessed be GOD the generality of the World do not arrive at this pitch. The Consciences of Men prevail so far, as, if not to restrain them from, yet to check and judge them for gross Impieties. Oh! take heed how you contradict the Light of your own Consciences, that you do not put out this *Candle of the Lord*, that you listen to this *inward Monitor*, this Witness of GOD of your own actions, that you have in your Breasts. This is a Beam of Divine Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the World. This is an Instance of GOD's Care in reference to the Recovery of Mankind, that He Enlightens us, Awakens us, Admonishes us, by a Natural Law written in our Consciences. Upon account of this *Natural Knowledge* that we have of GOD, and the ways of Righteousness, and Honesty it is that Solomon expresseth himself so Elegantly, *Prov. i. 20.* and so on. *Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth Her voice in the Streets. She cryeth in the chief places of Concourse in the opening of the Gates, in the City she uttereth Her Words; How long ye Simple ones will ye love Simplicity, and the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, and so forth. By these Figurative and Elegant Expressions, doth the Wise King set forth the large Provision that GOD affords us from the Principles of our own Natures, for our Direction in the Ways of Holiness and Righteousness; then concludes, as it there follows, that Man's Destruction is solely from himself. Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my Hands and no Man regarded; ye have set at naught all my Counsels, and would none of my Reproof, I also will laugh at the Calamity, When Distress and Anguish cometh upon you, they shall call upon me, but I will not answer: and so forth. Dreadfull Words! so much doth GOD take notice, how we improve and answer the Light that GOD vouchsafes us, even the Light of our own Consciences.*

But Brethren, there is still a greater Light that GOD hath Blessed us with, to lead and direct us to our Eternal Happiness, and

and therefore I add in the *Second* place, that GOD out of His Fatherly Care and Regard to our Salvation, hath in all Ages, according as He in his Wisdom thought fit, *Reveal'd His Will* unto Mankind by Extraordinary Means, by the Message of Angels, by Inspiration of Prophets, and *lastly*, which we are most concern'd in, by the sending of his own Son into the World, our Blessed Lord. I shall not now meddle with GOD's Dispensations upon this account with former Ages; what Revelation He was pleased to make of himself, before the Law given to *Moses*, and during the time of that Law from *Moses* to *Christ*, Neither shall I in this place dispute, Whether *Christ* were at all, or in what Degree, or Methods Reveal'd among the *Heathens*; *St. Peter* hath said sufficient to satisfy us in such Queries as these, in the 10th of the *Acts* ver 34, 35. Where we read these words of his, *Of a Truth I perceive that God is no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation He that feareth Him, and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him.* Our Business and Concern is, rather to consider what GOD hath done for us; how He hath by his own Son most clearly Reveal'd to us the Way and Means of our Eternal Happiness. We have the certainty of a Future State, the Rewards of a Holy Life, and the Everlasting Destruction of Impenitent Sinners, laid before our Eyes in the Gospel of *Christ*, and daily read them in the Writings of his Apostles, who were furnished with Miraculous Effusions of the Holy Ghost, on purpose to *Reveal* this Gospel to the World. Neither hath GOD's Care for our Salvation rested here. But in the

(3.) *Third* place, He is ready to supply us with the *Gracious Influences of His Spirit*, for the making these Means of the Light of our own Nature, and the Gospel Reveal'd, Effectual to our Salvation. Thus on GOD's part are all things ready; and therefore how inexcusable shall we be, if notwithstanding all the Means GOD uses for our Salvation, we yet die in our Sin, and in our Misery. Shall GOD be so highly concern'd to make us Happy in the Eternal Enjoyment of Himself, and shall we think it a Burden to joy in the solemn Assemblies of His People, to celebrate the Memorial of the great things He hath done for our Salvation? Shall our Dying Saviour Institute those Sacred Mysteries for a Memorial of Him, and shall we carelessly withdraw from them? Are the Sanctifying Graces of GOD's Spirit not worth seeking after? Or where do you expect to find them but in a Consciencious Attendance upon his Sacred Institutions. Alas! Men know not what Enemies they are to their own Souls while they turn aside from *Christ's Way*, and run into By-paths; where they may indeed meet with a *Spirit*, a Spirit of Error and Delusion, a Spirit of Pride and Censoriousness, a Turbulent Faction Spirit. But Brethren, the Spirit of *Christ* that Sanctifies our Hearts, that's only to be found in the way of *Christ*; and the way where we may find *Christ* is in the Assemblies of his People. *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midst of them.* You see *Christ's Promise* is to his People gathered together, say not therefore you can have

have the Spirit in your own Houses, and thereupon slight the Publick Assemblies. Again ; to them that are *Gathered together in my Name*. What's the meaning of being gathered together in Christ's Name? If there be any here that frequent unlawful Meetings, I might challenge them to answer me this Query, and tell me what it is to be gather'd together in Christ's Name. I only now advise every one to consider it in their own Consciences ; for my Time is Spent.

To you Brethren that are willing to wait on CHRIST in His own way, and to attend on those Holy Mysteries, this Promise speaks full : And you may expect CHRIST's Presence with you at this Holy Table, and the Influences of His Grace and Spirit, for the strengthening of your *FAITH*, the enlivening of your *HOPES*, and the encrease of your *LOVE* and *CHARITY* one towards another. For, Brethren, in our joyful Celebration of Divine Institutions, in gathering together for the Worshipping of GOD, we profess ourselves Children of the same Father, engaged in the same Concernments, and Expectants of the same Inheritance. And these Things duly consider'd must needs Sweeten our Affections, must work in us a secret Reverence and Endearment for each other. No such way, Brethren, to banish all Ill-will, Envy, and Malice out of our Hearts, as to meet often together in GOD's House. The very Presence and Society of each other in those Sacred Things, must needs induce us to a secret Love and Esteem of each other, and an inward fear of offending or injuring the meanest of us, we being all linked together in the most Sacred Bonds. Such blessed Fruits as these may we expect from our Holy Assemblies, by a Conscientious Attendance on them, we shall be enabled to Live Holily, and Dye Comfortably.

Which GOD in Mercy grant ; To whom be ascribed all Honour, and Glory, and Adoration henceforth and for ever.

Note, The Author Administred the Sacrament on the Day this Sermon was Preach'd.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

E Pistle Dedicatory, pag. 1. line 2. *r. Treatises*. p. 2. l. 27. *ast. Mirth* dele, and after *Pastime* dele, l. 43. for *becoming*, *r. become*. p. 7. l. 38. *r. such an*. p. 12. l. 22. for *first-Fruit*, *r. First Fruit*. p. 14. l. 8. *r. opponatur*. p. 20. l. 1. for *and r. or*, dele the Comma after *ought*. l. 29. dele *us*. p. 34. l. 9. for *would r. could*. p. 35. for *to r. too*. p. 36. l. 32. *r. to your Judge*, p. 38. l. 36. *r. the very Light*. p. 39. l. dele *the*, *r. reform*. *ibid.* l. 14. for *the even*, *r. even be*. The rest of the Errata, whether in the Words or Pointing the Reader is desired to correct.

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